



News Release

For Immediate Release:
Thursday, July 1, 2004

DEET is For Everyone; Keep it With You!

From Dusk to Dawn, Put Your DEET on!

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Fourth of July is a holiday that typically includes the entire family in outdoor activities such as camping, boating, or family picnics. This Fourth of July, remember to put mosquito repellent containing DEET into your vehicle, backpack or purse. The risk of getting West Nile virus is increasing with the temperature on the thermometer.

Many people think of West Nile virus as an “old person’s disease” and that they do not need to take precautions against mosquito bites. It is true that the risk of severe disease increases with age. But in the United States during 2003, 148 children under the age of 19 developed the most severe forms of the illness: meningitis, encephalitis, or paralysis. In fact, 43 percent of the cases of severe West Nile virus were in people under the age of 50. “There is nothing magic about the age 50,” declares Utah State Epidemiologist, Robert Rolfs, M.D. “While risk increases with age, there is no age at which there is no risk. Everyone needs protection.”

Utah’s state and local health departments have requested that retailers stock extra mosquito repellent with DEET this year in anticipation of West Nile virus. Convenient towelettes are easy to carry and use. Many manufacturers have developed mosquito repellent that is odorless and non-sticky.

Surrounding states, including South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and California have all reported human cases of West Nile virus. So remember to take your mosquito repellent with DEET along on family outings this holiday weekend, and use it on all family members over the age of two months and consider a stroller netting for babies. Put your DEET on from dusk until dawn. For added protection, wear long sleeves and pants. (For more information, see the attached fact sheet.)

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